

House Bill 382 Testimony

House Fish, Wildlife and Parks Committee

Mac Minard
Parent/Sportsman
February 3, 2009

Chairman Van Dyk and committee members thank you for the opportunity to provide comments today.

My name is Mac Minard and I am here representing myself as a parent, past Hunter Education Instructor, and avid sportsmen of over 40 years. I stand in support of HB 382.

We in Montana share a rich hunting heritage. As the leading state in the nation in hunter participation we pride ourselves in our skill, knowledge and passion for the outdoors. We are conservationists first and hunters second. We want nothing more than to pass that heritage on to the next generation so those values we all share survive into the future.

Who better than a father, a mother, a brother, a sister, or trusted friend, to introduce our youth to hunting. It is a well researched fact that kids from hunting families, who hunt with their families, are far more likely to become and remain hunters.

When I was 9 ½ my father put me on our old John Deere tractor. While he sat on the fender and guided me around the back field I learned how to run the controls. He had made the decision that at that age I was emotionally and physically ready to be of help to my family by running that piece of equipment. Families in Montana make those decisions every day. Perhaps you have a similar story. I believe it is no different with hunting. It is the parent who is in the best position to know when a child is physically and emotionally ready to hunt.

In today's American family, which I believe is the raw core of our nation, we find that kids' time is more structured than ever before. As a soccer coach for the past 12 years I have had the opportunity to spend months each year with young athletes and their families. What I have learned is that kids are growing up faster and are more involved in structured activities than I ever was. By age 12 and 13 most have entered middle school and they are involved with school sports, band, dance, church, clubs ... the list is endless. The desire to participate in those activities grows even stronger when they enter high school. The net effect is that

getting them hooked on hunting is now in competition with many other activities (including be a couch potato playing video games).

At the 9, 10, 11 year old level demands on their time is not as great. Some, not all, are emotionally and physically ready to join the family on a hunt while closely attended by a mentor. At this age we have the best opportunity to introduce hunting to them in a way that will make it a lasting part of who they are. HB 382 opens the door for that opportunity.

HB 382 also gives the opportunity for a busy adult, who may not yet know the joys of a day in the field in pursuit of game, to try it under the watchful eye of an experience hunter. If it suits them then they would take the prerequisite hunter Education course so that they too may hunt on their own and maybe mentor another person.

HB 382 is in no way meant to be a substitute for Hunter Education. Montana's 12 hour course and small army of qualified instructors are to be celebrated not diminished. I view the Apprentice Hunter program to be a partnership between parents who are actively engaged in the life of a youth and the Hunter Education program. We generate the interest and get them started and well-trained Instructors have an opportunity to polish, refine and finish.

Montana is number 1 in participation but we are in the basement in terms of new hunter recruitment. Apprentice hunters are active in 27 different states and account for some 250,000 new hunters. There has not been a single hunting accident involving a mentored youth, making that component the safest in the field.

I urge you to demonstrate your faith in the American Family structure and the future of hunting in Montana by supporting HB 382.

EXHIBIT 3
DATE 2/3/09
HB 382

TESTAMONY ON HB 328
APPRENTICE HUNTING BILL

HOUSE FISH WILDLIFE AND PARKS COMMITTEE

February 3, 2009

To Chairman Van Dyk, Vice Chair's Hendrick and McAlpin and members
of the House Fish Wildlife and Parks Committee

As a Montana Hunter Safety Instructor, father of two, and mentor of many
new hunters over the years, gun safety comes first.

As a hunting and outdoor community we need to get more youth involved,
and we need to do it early in life. I'm in support of HB bill 328.

Sincerely,
Kyle Skibsted
Missoula, MT

EXHIBIT 3
DATE 2/3/09
HB 382

APPRENTICE HUNTING BILL
TESTAMONY ON HB 328

HOUSE FISH WILDLIFE AND PARKS COMMITTEE

February 3, 2009

Dear Members of the House Fish Wildlife and Parks Committee;

I am a Pastor and work with both kids and their parents. I work with a group called High Point Outdoor Adventures in helping kids get into the outdoors and into hunting if they desire. Many parents are happy for the assistance especially those who are single parents or those who do not them-selves hunt.

After hearing about this bill I went on line and did a quick survey and found that Montana is in the minority for not allowing young kids to hunt with a parent or guardian before the legal hunting age for a hunting license. A number of states specifically state that if a hunter is below a certain age they can hunt with out a license.

<http://www.ncsl.org/programs/natres/minagehunt.htm> .

Some states have no legal minimum but require a hunter safety test and I have heard of some kids passing this very young (5-8). What Montana kid whose parents hunt hasn't begged to shoot a grouse with a .22? But we have to tell them "no". Why not allow them?

Allow the parent, grand parent, or guardian or delegated adult to make the judgment call. I think it would be good for Montana and good for hunting.

It is never bad for kids to have adults whom they look up to, whom they can trust to teach them and help encourage them in important things. I think this bill will allow that. I stand in support of HB 382.

With best regards;

Lloyd Phillips

5828 Miller Crk Rd
Missoula, MT 59803
406-251-5730

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TESTAMONY TO HOUSE FISH WILDLIFE AND PARKS COMMITTEE
APPRENTICE HUNTING BILL HB 328

February 3, 2009

To Chairman Van Dyk, Vice Chair's Hendrick and McAlpin and members of the House Fish Wildlife and Parks Committee

As a parent, a rancher, and a MT FWP Hunter Education instructor for 16 years, I support HB 382.

I have been in favor of changing our hunting laws for first time hunters for some years now. I am in favor of doing anything to increase our recruitment, and family participation. I support the "Families Afield Initiative" HB 382 as a way to do this.

I have noticed a reduction in young girls taking my classes and if I can't get them to take them at 11, I will never see them in the field.

I was in favor of mandatory Hunter Ed before you could hunt but I see now that wasn't all it was cracked up to be, and we have lost hunters because of it.

I don't think a mandated age before you can hunt is a good idea either, I think taking the age restriction on hunting off is a good idea, let parents and other family members decide what is right for their kids.

Thank You,

Miles G. Hutton
Turner, MT 59542